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SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

10 November 1952

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 284

SUBJECT: DRAFT MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR/INTELLIGENCE:
Program for Familiarization of O/NE Personnel with
Overseas Areas

The Problem

1. One of the essential factors in the estimating process is a sense of the intangible elements in the situation abroad, especially in areas which are undergoing social change or being subjected to intensive Soviet political warfare. These are elements which cannot adequately be conveyed by reports from the field, however good that reporting may be. In order to estimate with greater assurance, the personnel of this Office should have more than an abstract distillate of available intelligence; they should have a concrete appreciation of the way of life, the resources, and the political atmosphere in areas concerning which they are obliged to estimate. When so many estimates turn upon psychological factors upon which positive intelligence is not procurable, there is danger that the estimators may become attached to preconceptions or misconceptions.

Discussion

2. A conducted tour through certain capitals with prearranged briefings by US personnel is not the answer. Instead, this Office proposes that selected personnel should visit various countries or

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areas and acquaint themselves with those historical and religious traditions which influence its life, with the nature and size of its economic base, and with people of various classes and occupations. It is hoped that in many cases O/NE personnel can exploit personal acquaintances or such other entrees as they may have with citizens of the countries visited or with US personnel stationed there.

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3. The Office of National Estimates proposes to send a maximum of four [redacted] teams to various parts of the world each year, each for a period of [redacted] weeks. Each team would consist of [redacted] of the Board of National Estimates [redacted] of the Estimates Staff. In each instance, the team would concentrate on an area rather than a country. For example, on a trip to Western Europe the team would concentrate on the countries forming the EDC; on another trip the team would concentrate on the Arab States; one trip would concentrate on Southeast Asia; another on the strongly nationalist regimes in South America. In each instance, the travel teams would be carefully briefed in advance to insure that each individual understands the limited purpose of the trip and takes no action which will jeopardize security or otherwise interfere with established CIA channels and operations overseas.

4. Adequate travel funds for the execution of this program are contained in the budgetary allotments of this Office.

5. If this proposal is approved, this Office will forward through authorized channels requests for approval of individual

- 2 -

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SECRET

trips, and in each instance will specify what arrangements are desired as to [REDACTED] assistance required. Those arrangements will necessarily vary according to the composition of the team, the area to be visited, or special considerations. 25X1C

Recommendation

I recommend that the above plan be approved.

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

Concurrence: AD/IC

Approved: DD/I

- 3 -

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